

# COMMUNITY:

## leader intro

Can you remember the first time you went against what you believed to be true because of a friend? Maybe it was having just that one drink, or just giving that one answer, or just laughing at that one kid that one time. The thing is, big or small, we've all been there. Our friends, our peers influence us in huge ways.

We all seek to be known. Craving a community of people who know, accept, and love us is part of what it means to be human. We were made for just this! Our students are no exception to this desire, yet have this added twist of the weirdness of high school. Hormones are high. Inhibitions are low. Friend groups change constantly. Relationships start to feel like the real deal. Maybe your group has little freshmen looking for a complete new group of friends. Maybe you've got seniors who don't quite know when they started to view the world so differently from their best friend. Whatever it is, our students are going to look for community somewhere.

The problem is, friendship begins with acceptance, and often our society paints the church as the least accepting place there is. Our students will look for acceptance and they will find it somewhere. In order to keep them with us, we need to be the most accepting thing they can find. What if we made our Home Groups and HSM Live a place where students first feel accepted and then still loved for who they are? Securely nestled in love and acceptance is where real life change is going to begin for our students, where we can start walking through hard truths. We must first let our groups form true, authentic community. We must earn the right to speak truth in students' lives. So let's start the year by exploring what community looks like in the breath of God.

To begin, we will acknowledge that the Lord desires that we immerse ourselves in community. We were not made to walk through life alone! We were created to walk with one another. Then, we will talk about what good community looks like as we see that who we surround ourselves with shapes who we become.

At Blackhawk, our mission is to build a loving community that follows Christ in order to reach a community that is lost without Him.

Thanks for being on this journey with us! You rock!



# COMMUNITY:

*Created for community*

# WEEK 1

## Purpose:

- > To show that we have been hard-wired for community by a God who calls us to do life, not alone, but in relationship with other people
- > To challenge students to allow their HG community to be a true, intertwined community in which we are used in each other's lives to make us more like Jesus.

## Video Ideas:

- > God & Community: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1yZgww1DMU>
- > Jefferson Bethke: Why Church Community Matters <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NUGNLgMWmE>

## [—CONNECT—]

[30 minutes for questions, life sharing (ex. Highs & lows), & journals]

*Especially for groups that don't know each other well, take some more time getting to know one another! Pick some fun questions (here or from your head) to ask:*

1. What's your favorite way to eat a potato?
2. How would you survive a zombie apocalypse?
3. If you could have the answer to any question, what question would it be?
4. What really makes you angry?
5. If you had to give up one of your 5 senses, which one would it be?
6. Upper classmen: What advice would you give to a freshman? (Or to yourself as a freshman?) Freshmen: What do you want to know about high school?

## Questions guided toward content:

1. Would you describe yourself as more of an introvert or an extrovert? Why?
2. Who was the first friend you ever had? How did you become friends?
3. Have you ever been part of a friendship that made you better in some way? What did that look like?
4. What are you nervous about this year?
5. What are your hopes for this year? (In school, in your personal life, in Home Group/HSM, etc.)

## [—UNDERSTAND—]

[25 minutes for Understanding Questions]

The following verses show how God created us for community. As you read them, consider why community is so important for us.

### Read Romans 15:7

1. What do you think belonging to a community of believers meant to the Romans? Was it important?
2. What does it mean to accept each other? How can that make our community unique for other communities you've been a part of?
3. What does it mean that Christ has accepted us? What does it change?

### Read Hebrews 10:24-25

1. What does it mean to spur one another on? (You can share that: the Greek word used for "spur" is a word that means to irritate. We can re-read this phrase in the Bible, that we may irritate one another on towards love and good deeds -What does that mean to you?)
2. What are some ways we can spur one-another on?
3. What is Paul warning the community of believers against? Why is he concerned about commitment? What might happen if they stop meeting together?

### Read Galatians 6:2

1. How do you think the Galatians bore each other's burdens?
2. How does bearing burden's help us fulfill the law of Christ?

### Bonus Scripture about what a community should look like:

Love one another	John 13:34
Accept one another	Romans 15:7
Bear one another's burdens	Galatians 5:2
Confess sin to one another	James 5:15
Encourage one another	Hebrews 3:13
Be kind to one another	Ephesians 4:32
Serve one another	Galatians 5:13
Forgive one another	Colossians 3:13
Pray for one another	James 5:16
Offer hospitality to one another	1 Peter 4:9
Be patient w one another	Ephesians 4:2
Honor one another	Romans 12:10
Submit to one another	Ephesians 5:21
Greet one another w a holy kiss	1 Corinthians 16:20

## [—LIVE—]

[20 minutes for Living Questions]

1. How can our Home Group be a place where we accept one-another and others well?
2. How can we commit to one another at Home Group and outside of Home Group in a way that allows us to grow?
3. In what ways can we bear each other's burdens? How can we celebrate each other's joys?
4. What part of tonight do you want to remember throughout the week?

# COMMUNITY: WEEK 2

## Who you're with shapes who you are

### **Purpose:**

- > To talk about how much our friends/community shape who we become.
- > To help students examine their own friendships and discern whether they are healthy harmful.
- > To discuss what your hopes are for your small group community this year

### **Let's get this party started! Here are some fun videos:**

- > Things We Should Say More Often: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5yCOSHeYn4>
- > Kids Talk: Making Friends: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASdj7IGc8aQ>

### **[—CONNECT—]**

[30 minutes for questions, life sharing (ex. Highs & lows), & journals]

*These questions are guided toward talking about a) positive relationships that exist in your students' lives and b) what your group wants this small group community to look like this year.*

*Especially for groups that don't know each other well, take some more time getting to know one another! Pick 1 -2 fun questions to ask:*

1. What's your least favorite song that's currently popular? Your favorite?
2. If you were forced to have something grow out of your head for the rest of your life, what would you choose?
3. How would your friends describe you in 3 words?
4. What's the most daring thing you've ever done?
5. Who is your hero?

*Questions guided toward content:*

- 1 What's the weirdest word or phrase that you've adopted because a friend uses it?
- 2 What makes someone a good friend? What kind of characteristics do you look for in a friend?
3. Who knows you best? How did your friendship/relationship get to that point?
4. What is important for the people in this group to know about you?
5. As we start a new year, where are you at spiritually? Encourage honesty.
6. Why are you involved in Home Group? (*Again, encourage honesty here, if they're here because their mom makes them come, that's ok!*)
  - a. What are your expectations or hopes for Home Group and our small group this year?

## [—UNDERSTAND—]

[25 minutes for Understanding Questions]

1. Give students 1 minute to write out a list of the people they spend the most time with (family, friends, classmates, people in Home Group, etc.) Tell students that this list is just for them, not to share with the whole group.
  - a. Ask: Without sharing names, what kinds of characteristics do you see in these people? (i.e., passionate, funny, gossipy, athletic, etc.)
  - b. Ask students if they see similar qualities in themselves to those of their list.
  - c. Try to shape a conversation toward whether or not the characteristics they see in their closest friends are characteristics they want to see in themselves.
2. Read **Proverbs 13:20**. Now read it in the Message version: "Become wise by walking with wise; hang out with fools and watch your life fall to pieces."
  - a. What do you think makes someone "wise" or "a fool" in high school?
  - b. At this point, you'll probably hear something like, "Wait a second... Shouldn't we be friends with people who are different than us? Don't you want us to hang out with non-Christians?" Even if your students don't bring it up, talk about it! Encourage students to think about the difference between influencing someone and letting someone influence them. Talk about the importance of having a person or people who will hold them accountable, and will speak the truth in love into their lives. **The gist: of course you should be friends with people who believe different things, but it is important to keep yourself in check as you do.**
3. Now that we've talked a bit about how to be intentional with who we are friends with, what should we act like in those friendships? Check out **John 15: 12-13**.
  - a. What does it mean to "lay down your life" for a friend? What could that look like?

## [—LIVE—]

[20 minutes for Living Questions]

1. What do you want or need from this Home Group Community this year?

Spend time creating a document to describe your small group together. What do you want your group to be about? What are your goals for the year? Have fun with this! Some examples...

- > We will make a commitment to making small group a priority, and will be here whenever we can.
- > We will seek to learn from one another and keep an open mind.
- > We will keep what is said here confidential, knowing that this is a safe space to share tough stuff.
- > We will give one another the benefit of the doubt.
- > We will be honest about where we are at, what we're confused about, and what we need from the group.

Naturally, every group will look a bit different! Lean into what your students feel is important.